APPEAL

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# Jerry Ray Claims Pressure By FBI In Plot Questions

## Agent Is Named

### Brother Of Convict Says He Was Told To Talk Or Go Before U.S. Jury

By RICHARD LENTZ

Jerry Ray, a younger brother of James Earl Ray, said yesterday two FBI agents "threatened to bring me before a federal grand jury" to answer questions on an alleged conspiracy in the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The younger Ray, a St. Louis resident, visited his brother for about 15 minutes yesterday at the Shelby County jail.

James Earl Ray is being held there under tight security in preparation for a hearing Monday on his motion for a new trial in the King murder.

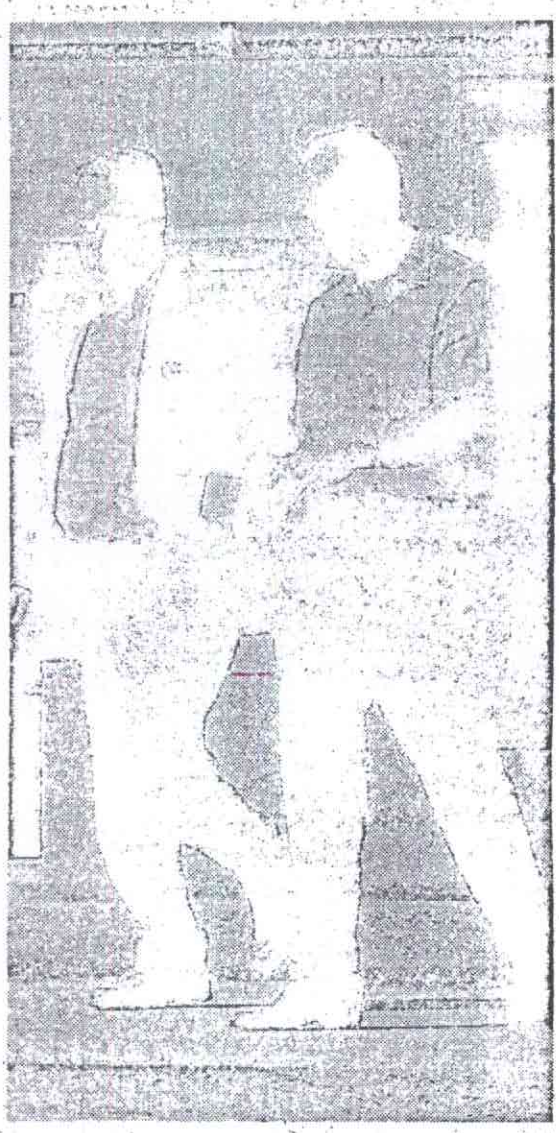
Jerry Ray told a reporter two men who identified themselves as agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation yesterday questioned him about his statement last year that there was a conspiracy in the King case. The agents approached Ray yesterday at the jail.

"I didn't tell them anything," said the younger Ray, who was accompanied by J. B. Stoner of Savannah, Ga., one of James Earl Ray's attorneys.

"You don't talk to your enemies — you talk to your friends," said Ray.

"They asked a question on the conspiracy statement. I wouldn't answer it and they threatened to bring me before a federal grand jury. They said if I didn't talk then, I would be held in contempt."

He said Mr. Stoner advised him to remain silent.



Attorney J. B. Stoner (left), Jerry Ray *Leaving Shelby County Criminal Courts Building*
—Staff Photo by Jim Shearin

One of the agents, said Jerry Ray, showed him an identification card with the name "Joe C. Hester."

Robert G. Jensen, special agent in charge of the Memphis office of the FBI, yesterday acknowledged there is an agent named Joe C. Hester assigned to his office.

"We're making inquiries all the time into all sorts of things," Mr. Jensen said, "but I'm sorry, I cannot comment on anything on the Ray case until it is over."

Jerry Ray said he and another brother, John Ray, also of St. Louis, plan to visit the prisoner late Saturday afternoon.

Memphis attorney Richard J. Ryan, one of the three defense lawyers working on the new trial motion, conferred with his client for 90 minutes yesterday.

"I feel there was a conspiracy," said the younger Ray, "but he (James Earl Ray) wasn't involved in it. I think if he can get a new trial it can be proved."

Defense and state attorneys will argue on the motion for a new trial Monday at 9:30 a.m. before Criminal Court Judge Arthur C. Faquin Jr.

Judge Faquin yesterday dismissed contempt of court citations against seven men in the Ray case.

Two reporters, Charles Edmundson of The Commercial Appeal and Roy Hamilton of the Memphis Press-Scimitar, were cited for contempt by the late Judge W. Preston Battle along with Arthur Hanes, a former attorney for Ray, and private investigator Renfro T. Hays.

The others were author William Bradford Huie, the Rev. James T. Bevel, a one-time aide to Dr. King, and George Bonebrake, an FBI fingerprint specialist.

Charles Holmes, press officer in the Ray case, said yesterday Judge Faquin has ordered disbanded an amici curiae (friends of the court) committee from the Memphis and Shelby County Bar Association.

The committee, which recommended the contempt of court citations be dismissed, advised the late Judge Battle and Judge Faquin on court orders in connection with publicity.

James Earl Ray was transferred Thursday to Memphis from the state prison in Nashville, where he was serving a 99-year sentence after he pleaded guilty March 10 to the murder of Dr. King on April 4, 1968.

Sheriff William N. Morris Jr. said Ray had a routine physical examination yesterday morning and he "seemed to be in good shape — in good spirits."